A NEW EDJTOR AND DIRECTORY



HUMAN ETHOLOGY NEWSLETTER

JOAN S. LOCKARD, EDITOR VOLUME 3 UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON DECEMBER 1983 ISSUE 12 SEATTLE WASHINGTON 98195

EDITORIAL POLICY

Effective January 1, 1984, our new editor is Robert M. Adams, Department of Psychology, 145 Cammack Building, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY 40475. Bob has instigated the following policy: submitted materials for publication in HEN, of more than half page or so, be of suitable quality for photocopying. Standard typeface styles are encouraged.

DIRECTORY

This is the second listing of our membership, complete with names, addresses, phone numbers and research interests; the first accompanied the December 1982 issue of HEN. If our information regarding your status is incorrect, please send Bob Adams the most recent data so he can update the files for the next publication of the directory.

POOR SHOWING

Only two members responded to the forum Question regarding a formal structure of officers for ISHE: one in favor, one opposed. More active participation of our membership is essential if ISHE is to survive. Passive acceptance of the work of a few leads to nonrepresentation and inevitable disinterest and disintegration.

ELECTION

The ballot for ISHE Executive Board members is appended. Please mail by January 31, 1984.

BOOK REVIEW

THE NEW RACISM: CONSERVATIVES AND THE IDEOLOGY OF THE TRIBE BY Martin Barker, Junction Books, London, 1981
SOCIOBIOLOGY AND THE HUMAN DIMENSION By Georg Breuer, University Press, Cambridge, 1982.
ACAINST BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM Edited by Steven Rose, Allison & Busby, London, 1982.
THE SHAPING OF MAN: PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF SOCIOBIOLOGY By Roger Trigg, Blackwell, Oxford, 1982.

Reviewed by Ian Vine, University of Bradford, England

Unremitting publication to our own species, have continued ever since E.O. Wilson's 'New Synthesis' first appeared. In the U.S.A. Stephen Gould and Richard Lewontin still conduct a ruthless crusade through their domination of the relevant columns of the New York Review of Books. In Britain, Steven and Hilary Rose perform a similar function within the serious sections of the non-specialist media. Thus, sociobiology continues to get a bad press, even if its students attempt to correct some of the wilder excesses of theories.

This recent clutch of paperbacks amply demonstrates, in a variety of ways, the tragic absurdity of what can happen when ideological; considerations become the major focus for disputes within science. If I concentrate more upon this problem than on the detailed content of the texts in question, it is precisely because the public image of sociobiology has taken over from the theories themselves as the basis upon which judgements are made and accusations are leveled. There philosophies of science of the popularisers, whether or not it can be demonstrated that the theoretical models developed by Hamilton, Trivers, Maynard Smith and others are inherently flawed by unsupportable assumptions. Likewise, there can be no defense when often very tenuous and speculative extensions of the theories to human behaviour are presented as fact, or when awkward data are too readily explained away in ad hoc fashion. It is equally clear that some sociobiologists have been guilty of political naivety about the uses to which their ideas might be put, and too ready to hide behind a myth of totally objective and value-free science. Yet, admitting all this is in no way tantamount to acknowledging the legitimacy of the radical critics attitude to sociobiology, which has

been one of implacable, uncompromising hostility, and a total lack of charity or sympathy. There can be no justification when critics whose own ideological commitments are unequivocally extreme exploit their scientific and political reputations to foster an image of sociobiology which they must know to be hopelessly distorted and one-sided. Although the raw material has unfortunately been provided by careless popularisers, this unfortunately been provided by careless popularisers, this unfortunately been provided by careless popularisers, this nessentation of viewpoints, which has made 'sociobiology' into a dirty word amongst so many of the critics' audience. In castigating it as the latest and most pernicious incarnation of reactionary politics masquerading as science, they have succeeded too well in mustering much of the political behaviour. It is one thing to insist that as yet social behaviour. It is one thing to insist that as yet sociobiological hypotheses are mostly based upon crude genetic models, controversial data, and an insufficient grasp of enormously complex bio-social processes. But this is a very different matter from actively promoting prejudices, which preclude the constructive debates by which the popular bio-social processes by which the popular

The impact of critics like Barker and the Roses in the otherwise incisive piece on the resurgence of the authoritarian right, a contributor to an influential left-wing journal can cite them as showing how sociobiology "elevates. to the status of science two common sense", right-wing theories of human nature; first, that human beings are essentially acquisitive and selfish, and second, that tribalism and thereby nationalism are the natural and inevitable consequences of human evolution" (New Socialist) No. 13, Octonsequences of human evolution dides to feel like a political pariah through my own academic commitment to reciprocity selection and the like, I resent very deeply the relevant those without the expertise to digest the relevant technical literature have been encouraged to accept such grossly distorted views of what is actually implied by a plausible application of the basic theories to human beings.

The irony here is twofold. Not only is there the element of self-fulfilling prophesy if liberal and left-wing scientists are intimidated into leaving sociobiology as the exclusive property of those on the right; but it is also the case that the message which readers find in books like those of Barker and Rose depends heavily upon the climate which such critics have already created through more superficial reviews and other denunciations. In fact these texts are mu, a more interesting, and rather more restrained, than on might

suppose. Shorn of their often rhetorical style, and of their predilection for denouncing stereotypically extreme views which no competent sociobiologist would actually espouse, they do highlight effectively most of the dangers which must be guarded against in human sociobiological research.

serious flaws in sociobiology's most fundamental empirical from them are hopelessly wrong. These volumes will disappoint those readers who hope to find rigorous demonstrations of of the various over-simplifications embodied within the processes, and so on. Surely no sociobiologists are unaware genome is only a <u>partial</u> determinant of developmental mutations is only a part of the evolutionary story, that the concedes that natural selection operating upon random genetic specific parts of sociobiological theory are actually rare; political contexts within which theories emerged. Attempts at detailed refutation of the actual premises or logic of knowledge, seeking to uncover positivists, reductionist, This does not necessarily mean that the inferences derived population genetic and evolutionary models so far available. and in any case they lose most of their force once one fields - and often finding in them reflections of the sociodeterminist, and mechanist assumptions in many theoretical the level of philosophies of science or the sociology of which the contributors find right across the spectrum of various facets of the 'hard-nosed biological reductionism' sociobiology; and both are predominantly critical, attacking of Biology Group's 1980 conference in Eressanone, Italy. Both volumes deal with issues much broader than just the status of biological specialisms. Steven Rose has edited the proceedings of the Dialectics Much of the discussion is pitched at

also upon the exercise of conscious intelligence, on intersubjective communication, and on socio-political systems. blueprint' for phenotypic traits is misleading. And in human beings we cannot expect our genes to play more than a limited acquisition of traits of a psychological kind, that depend and indirect causal role in predisposing and constraining the organism involves numerous causal factors, including structural constraints and internal feedbacks as well as emphasize that the transition from fertilized egg to mature generate emergent properties, not predictable simply from that higher levels of organization within material systems the genome as the ultimate controller of and comprehensive external stimulation. Even in simple organisms the notion of knowledge of their constituent elements. It is important to powerful, non-reductionist models is, not surprisingly, far processes. stress the inadequacy of its existing theories in accounting from being fulfilled. It is easy and appropriate to insist for many of the complexities of phylogenetic and ontogenetic The critics of reductionist biology are surely right to But the apparent promise of providing more

It is in fact the ethologist, Patrick Bateson, who is

might eventually bring about. The implacable opposition we face from the critics is itself hard to explain except in to play in explaining human behaviour. I find it perplexing that scientists, even Marxist ones, should so readily condemn an emerging discipline because its first publicists make Schneirla's insistence upon the meaninglessness of dichotomizing `nature' and `nurture,' and thus of seeing their influences as simply additive. He also stresses the more sympathetic to sociobiology as a project than are any other contributors to Rose's volumes, who reminds us of precluded by their readiness to interpret any talk of limits terms of ideology. Constructive dialogue seems to be revisions to their theories which a more dialectical biology grandiose claims or develop a rather dangerous shorthand language (such as 'selfish genes' and 'genes for altruism'), with, and very little that seriously threatens my own view of decidedly uneasy about the tendency of anthropologists like Sahlins to insist upon the causal autonomy of human cultural means that for many purposes there is no need to attempt to I see no reason why sociobiologists should not welcome the the significant but modest role that sociobiology can expect the sound and fury of these two books I find much to agree interactionist, or 'dialectical' perspective the biological processes, since from a thoroughly materialist, causation of behaviour. functional nature of properly sociobiological theories, which to human plasticity as support for reactionary politics. and social can never be entirely disconnected. Beneath all pry apart biological and social aspects of the direct Indeed some other authors are

the new racists draw explicitly upon popular accounts of ethology and sociobiology which, with a little further strident social philosophy can claim some kind of intellectual 'tribalism' as the foundation of a healthy society. For all inferiority of alien peoples, there is a stress upon the limits of human sympathy, on our strong attachment to kith and kin, to cultural traditions, and to territory. From Enoch Powell's suggestion that immigrants will dilute our cultural new racism in the conservative philosophy of David Hume, and his insistence that reason is 'the slave of the passions.' Instead of the crudely chauvinistic postulate of the innate misconceptions are correspondingly clearer. As a political philosopher he devotes much of his text to a useful, if depressing, documentation of the resurgence of a newly nationalistic ideology. And Barker easily demonstrates how pedigree in support of its patrictic, its incoherence and contradiction on matters of detail, this family unit, self-help, 'free' competition, and other 'Victorian values,' the emphasis is upon 'instinct' and of origin, through to Margaret Thatcher's celebration of the family unit, self-help, `free' competition, and other decades of relative affluence. pragmatic toleration of multi-racial society during sophisticated racism within British politics, superceding the identity and values, and should be returned to their countries In this respect Barker's book is more explicit, and its Barker finds the roots of this xenophobic

distortion, provide pseudo-scientific legitimation for their claims.

former is largely equated with Lorenz's group-selectionist explanation of ingroup loyalty and outgroup hostility, with a dash of Ardrey and Morris thrown in for good measure. He has little difficulty in thereby dismissing ethology in general as 'ideological science,' an unfalsifiable preformationism which makes xenophobia inevitable. Sociobiology is represented as with its apparently greater scientific sophistication making it "the most dangerous theorization of racism currently available" (p. 100). Here Barker interprets kin selection theory as saying that we are innately determined to prefer and aid our close kin, while treating others selfishly or aggressively. He is able to quote Barash on the drop in genetic relatedness found at inter-societal boundaries, van based traits - before concluding that sociobiology makes natural `new racists' of us all. He then goes on to document enterprise, insisting that its conclusions essentially derive coming to essentially the same conclusion by different means, den Berghe on selection pressures arising from inter-societal competition, and Wilson on the cultural amplification of genethe familiar range of objections to the sociobiological He then discusses ethology and sociobiology in turn. from the inbuilt conservative ideology of its premises. more sophisticated than some, and does at least acknowledge that the sociobiologists he attacks deny the prescriptive that the sociobiologists he attacks deny the prescriptive reasons why he is unimpressed by such efforts. One is that he sees sociobiologists as committed to believing that culture is a product of human genes, and thus unable to thwart their imperatives. Of course on such a rigidly genetic determinist view as this it would be hollow rhetoric to insist that one's theory in no sense legitimated racist conclusions - but no sociobiologist is that extreme. The other reason is that Barker rejects the face-value dichotomy itself, insisting that all claims about naturalness are inherently evaluative. It makes no sense, he claims, to propose that the good life for human beings is one which goes against our most basic motives. Sociobiology is inherently reactionary because it draws its central concepts from an individualistic, competitive view of human life, thereby building its conclusions into its premises - without recognizing their ideological nature, and implicitly prescriptive implications.

The final point is familiar enough, and Barker is no more able to turn his generalized assertion into a concrete demonstration of specific errors in specific parts of sociobiological core theories than are other critics. As to the point about basic motives, here Barker is surely on firmer ground, and almost highlights sociobiology's most serious current weakness. The core theories are about the effects of

genetically facilitated traits upon fitness, and do no more than hint at plausible motivational mechanisms. Certainly the may be the most effective means of furthering one's 'genetic of human motives too incautiously; its focus upon the tend to promote fitness - especially the concern for social approval which makes us susceptible to cultural indoctrination. As soon as sociobiological analyses can conflicts between our natural inclinations that we see a role for reason in arranging an acceptable balance between them. sympathy for those we know intimately, this in no way means that it is futile to 'oppose our genes' with the intelligence at our disposal. Ironically, it is tempting to suggest that the terror which the ideological critics of sociobiology conscious motives of humans need bear no simple relation to their adaptive funtions - unselfish love for one's children self-interest.' Not only has sociobiology used the language little attempt has been made to consider other motives which better represent human beings as naturally predisposed to develop a number of semi-independent motives, they will begin is precisely when we acknowledge the possibility of complex Our capacity and moral necessity for exercising choices, for resisting some natural impulses, arises precisely because we to offer a much more realistic picture of our natures. And it are not fully deterministic "organic machines," responding evidently feel, about conceding any natural biases within our mental worlds, is actually symptomatic of a lack of confidence of the moment. If kin selection theory helps to explain why partial, biological determinism of a moderate and realistic human sociobiology? automatically to the most potent impulses and external stimuli our psychology is such that we find it easier to feel determinatism is a more tyrannical master than the restricted, selfishness-altruism dimension has been too exclusive. Perhaps about the power of human reason.

I have left no space to do anything like justice to the books by Breuer and by Trigg. Trigg's analysis predominantly avoids going deeply into the technical details of sociobiology. His concern is with rather more abstract and general issues of principle - particularly with the incoherence of both extreme environmentalism and extreme biologies, and with the distinctive significance of reason and morality. Although he perhaps settles too readily for a common-sense compromise which begs important questions, he does make telling points against the extreme cultural relativists who repudiate all claims for a common human nature.

Breuer's focus is more empirical, and his style is more journalistic. As a basic introduction to sociobiology and its surrounding controversies it has some merit — and not only because most of its competitors have serious inadequacies. Like Trigg, he seeks a middle ground, rejecting both the more grandiose claims and the more intemperate misrepresentations and attacks, and he does achieve quite a reasonable balance. One asset is his constant effort to compare and contrast human

behaviours with those of our primate relatives; one drawback is the book's rather loose structural organization. but of most interest to me was his extended discussion of the political status of sociobiology. As a one-time refugee from Nazism, he has no sympathy for those who throw labels like 'racist' and 'fascist' at sociobiologists, or themselves seek to stifle controversial debate. He finds it absurd, and far from the spirit of Marx's and Engels's work, that sections of the political left will not countenance constraints upon the plasticity of our natures for which our shared human genotype, or individual genetic differences, are responsible. And while noting the appeal of vulgarized sociobiology to conservatives, and the dangers of couching theories in the terminology of capitalist economics, he shores up my own doubt's about any ideological contamination within the core theories themselves. As he says, however it is described or whatever forms it may take, exploitation be found, like selfishness, in non-capitalist societies.

The residual fault which Breuer finds is what he calls the 'atmosphere' of most sociobiological writing. Partly no doubt from ignorance and naivety, partly from fascination with a new viewpoint, there is a tendency to talk as if the partial view of the person that sociobiology can offer were the whole story. It thereby tacitly demeans our view of ourselves by, as yet, neglecting the multiplicity of our motives — and seeming to devalue our altruism and subjective freedom and rationality. In my view this fault is one we can hope to remedy without discarding any important elements in the basic theories. Perhaps sociobiology can acquire a new positive image.

Footnote 1 - This reviewer's conviction is that sociobiological analyses can, when seen against the background of hierarchical social systems, lend support to radical critiques of liberal/conservative ideologies (see e.g. my article on 'The social evolution of morality,' H.E.N. 3(3):30-33). I would be glad to hear from others interested in this kind of investigation.

RECENT LITERATURE

Readers are invited to send literature that they would like included in RECENT LITERATURE to the editor.

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BULLETIN BOARD

<u>Behavioral Biology at UCLA</u> A dozen or more faculty from six departments have combined to ensure that graduate students in animal behavior and human ethology gain a common shared perspective on issues in the study of behavior. The aim is also to arrange access for students to the courses most appropriate to their interests no matter which department the student enters. A basic two-quarter core seminar has been prepared and can be taken by students who enter any of these departments. This group is encouraging applications from students for Fall Quarter, 1984.

The Behavioral Biology group at he University of California, Los Angeles brings together graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty with a commitment to research in the biological aspects of human and animal behavior. Interested students may participate in its activities after first gaining admission into one of the referenced UCLA departments and while fulfilling that departemnt's course requirements. Members of the Behavioral Biology group present an annual seminar, reviewing current issues in behavior and behavioral seminar, reviewing current issues in behavior and behavioral ecology and provide first-hand laboratory or field research experience under the direction of one or more of the faculty. The goal of the Behavioral Biology group is to produce highly qualified research scientists, and to offer a unified approach to the study of human and animal behavior not usually found in any single university department. For further information or application forms, please write to the graduate admissions secretary in either the department of Anthropology, Biology, Education, Physiology, or Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

The International Society for Ecological Psychology (ISEP) was recently founded to promote ecological perspectives on psychological phenomenon. Recognition of the tight interconnection of perception and action, and of mutual fit of organisms and their natural environments are fundamental to this perspective. The chief activity of ISEP has been scholarly meetings. ISEP also publishes a newsletter and will soon have its own journal. A further description of ISEP and one of its meetings was published in Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 1983, 9 1, 162-267. Membership information can be obtained from Dr. William Mace, Dept. of Psychology, Trinity College, Hartford, CT

Home. School, and Community In Adolescent Education by Francis Ianni, Teachers College, Columbia University In this monograph, Francis Ianni, an anthropologist and psychoanalyst, presents a holistic model that can account

for adolescent problems and that can be used to describe the tensions between the inner and outer experience characterizing the psychosocial life of youth. In the spring of 1979, a group of anthropologists, sociologists, and psychoanalysts, headed by Dr. Ianni and supported by the Spencer Foundation, began a phased study of adolescence in the spencer Foundation, began crural communities. The researchers looked at how adolescence was structured by the family, school, workplace, media, criminal justice system, and peer group, and asked how these authorities interacted to create a code of rules. Reported here are some of the findings from the field work, the psychodynamic interviews, and the policy and literature reviews. This monograph examines the connections and conflicts saw and heard them in actual communities. For further information, write ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027.

(Ann Arbor) <u>Michigan Quarterly Review</u>, the cultural and literary journal of the University of Michigan, invites manuscripts for its fifth special issue: <u>Science & The Human Image</u>. This collection will consider recent developments in the sciences which influence the perception of <u>Homo sapiens</u> as a creature, and as a participant in society and the cosmos. The future of human nature as an entity will be addressed. Deadline for submissions is September 1, 1984. Address submissions to: Editor, Science & the Human Image, Michigan Quarterly Review, University of Michigan, 3032 Rackham Building, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

<u>Tulane's graduate program in psychology</u> has had a strong emphasis on general experimental psychology for over twenty-five years. Nearly all of the faculty contribute to this area of study. Especially strong training in methodology, experimental design, and data analysis is available to students in each sub-area of the General-Experimental program, as well as to students in the School Psychology and Industrial-Organizational training programs. Special research resources are the Psychomotor Laboratory, the Newcomb Nursery School, and special laboratories in the areas of physiological, comparative and social psychology of human and animal learning.

Financial aid in the form of teaching assistantships is available. The assistantship includes a waiver of tuition and a stipend. Stipends for first-year assistants in 1983-84 range from \$4000 to \$6000 for one extremely promising new student. The program is planned for full-time study for the Ph.D., and is expected to take three years beyond the somewhat longer to complete the program. So that students may receive individual attention to their training needs, only 10 to 15 students are admitted to the General-Experimental Program each year.

Admission to the program is based on evaluation of all undergraduate work, GRE scores, three letters of recommendation, and any other evidence of research achievement. For further information, write to General-Experimental Graduate Admissions Committee, Department of Psychology, Tulane Univ., New Orleans, Louisiana 70118.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Xth Congress of the <u>International Primatology Society</u> will be held July 22-27, 1984 in Nairobi, Kenya. Please write to James G. Else, Institute of Primate Research, National Huseums of Kenya, P.O. Box 34505, Nairobi, Kenya, for further information.

American Paychological Association Toronto, August 24-28, 1984. James Kalat, Program Chairman of Division 6 (Division of Physiological and Comparative Psychology), is soliciting proposals for contributed posters, symposia, discussion sessions, workshops, and suggestions for invited speakers in the areas of comparative and physiological psychology. APA members may also participate given that they are sponsored by an APA member. Young scientists whose papers or posters are accepted for presentation may compete for the D. O. Hebb Award. All application materials must be submitted by January 20, 1984. Non-APA members may obtain further information regarding submission procedures by contacting James Kalat, Department of Psychology, North Carolina State University. Raleigh, NC 27650, (919) 737-2252.

The 6th annual meeting of the <u>American Society</u> of <u>Primatology</u>, hosted by Humboldt State University, will be held in Arcata, California, June 29th through July 3rd, 1984. The scientific sessions, business meetings, commercial exhibits, etc. will be held on campus, where housing also will be available. Details of registration fees, housing costs, arrangements, etc. will be announced later.

August 13-17, 1984 at Eastern Washington University in Cheney is the site of the annual meeting of the <u>Animal Behavior Society</u>. Sessions are are being planned and one will celebrate the 20th Anniversity of the Society by reviewing its history, honoring founding members and presenting a slide show of past events and key people. Contact Dietland Huller-Schwarze, Chair of the Anniversary Committee, Dept. Envir. and Forest Biology, SUNY, Syracuse, NY, 13210 for suggestions. Steven B. Christopher is the host of the meeting and he can be reached at Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA, 99004.

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR HUMAN ETHOLOGY

Nembership and Newsletter

Society or another major society. Animal Behavior Society, the International Primatological ethology abstracts, and weets annually in conjunction with the quarterly newsletter, collates an annual selection of human executive board and a number of committees, publishes a evolutionary problems. The Society maintains an elected which elicit and support certain behavior patterns, the development, environmental, ecological and social processes research that addresses the questions of individual perspectives in the study of humans. It encourages empirical function and significance of behavior, and comparative and The ISHE was formed with the goal of promoting ethological

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International Society for Human Ethology

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